THE OTTAWA FREE TRADER.

OUR COUNTRY—HER COMMERCE—AND HER FREE INSTITUTIONS.

VOL. IV. OTTAWA, ILLINOIS, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1843. NO. 28.

AMERICA TO IRELAND.

Men of Ireland! From the graves
Where our Fathers sleep,
Comes a voice, like coming waves,
Stern and deep:
From the hill-side and the valley,
And from the mountain glen;
Hearken! for it bids ye rally,
In the might of men!

Hearken!—Thus its murmurs swell—
"Sons of glorious sires!
By the shrines ye love so well,
By your lyres;
By your martyred dead who slumber,
Ay, by home and hearth
Let not tyrants longer cumber
Thus your groaning earth!

"Stand erect! in God's name, stand!
Onward! for the Right,
Heart to heart and hand to hand,
To the fight!
Bow no more, like driven cattle,
To the Saxon lord;
Onward! and in Freedom's battle,
God shall give ye ward!

"Onward! wherefore should ye pause?
Fear ye death may come?
What is life, when despot law
Strike ye dumb?
What, when Hope's last link is sundered?
What!—oh, better far
That the ocean o'er ye thundered,
Than be what ye are!"

Men of Ireland! Thus the graves
Of our Fathers cry:
Men, who rather than be slaves,
Joyed to die;
And their sons, from hill and valley,
And from mountain glen,
Catch the song and bid ye rally,
In the might of men!

Bid ye rally, like your sire,
Strong to do or die,
Till young Freedom's beacon fire,
Gild your sky,
God is with ye—who shall falter?
Justice—who withstand?
Onward then! for hearth and altar,
Right, and native land!

THE BIBLE.

Skeptic, spare that book,
Touch not a single leaf,
Nor on its pages look
With eye of unbelief;
'Twas my forefather's stay
In the hour of agony:
Skeptic, go thy way,
And let that old book be.

That good old book of life
For centuries has stood,
Unharmed amid the strife
When the earth was drunk with blood—
And would'st thou harm it now,
And have its truths forgot—
Skeptic, forbear thy blow,
Thy hand shall harm it not.

From the Knickerbocker.

SKETCH OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

No sketch of any southern state of the Union, can faithfully present its features to the reader without bringing into view the great population of slaves. Of South Carolina is this especially true for there not only do the bondmen outnumber the free, but the customs of society, the laws, the daily pursuits, the very habits of thought and expression and life, are all inwrought and interwoven with this great institution so intimately, that it is recognized in every movement, and forced upon you at every hour. The bell that sends its long summons over the city at night and morning; the twilight reveille; the city guard; the clanking of the musket under your window in the death of midnight; the trained bands mustering at every fire alarm; the loud cry of the watchman sounding from ward to ward at each quarter of the hour, until it dies away in the distance—all declare to you that you live and walk in the land of slaves. You see in the market—where the German soldier strides up and down through the avenue the live-long day. You hear it on the bustling mart, in the excited exchange, through the rattling streets. You find it every where—and at the buoyant party, or the social dinner, in your morning stroll, or evening siesta—there is upon you a restraint, awkward and irksome beyond endurance.

And yet, if the picture can be varied by lighter shades, why not so regard it? The heart which would oftentimes be repelled from the hideous deformity of human misery, is attracted by some fair proportions which ally it to its species, and by gazing upon what does not revolt the feelings, becomes itself a partaker of the untoward lot, and bound by new ties to aid the sufferer. For myself, it has not been in the shocking descriptions of itinerant enthusiasts, or the revolting vignettes of newspaper or pamphlet that I have found my sympathies most awakened for the slave—but in his quiet cabin—where I have learned his happy nature, and recognized him for a fellow man and brother.

There is no trait of character which the colored race possesses that is so remarkable as their habitual cheerfulness. Wherever you find the negro in the city or in country, at the house of plantation, eating his scanty meal in the pine forests of North Carolina, or following the lumbering wheels of the Kentucky wagon to the distant market, at play or work, hungry or satiated, he is ever disposed with philosophic equanimity, to make the best of his condition. Even at the auction place that place, of all others where slavery appears in its naked deformity, he rarely loses his hilarity—and if he can but manage to be sold at a price below his real value, he is abundantly contented. Where it not that the better feelings of one's nature suffer so rude a shock at these marts of human flesh, the contest that is constantly between the auctioneer and slave, the seller and sellee, would be sufficiently amusing. To bring a price—to stand his master in a sum so small that he shall feel no necessity to overtask his labor, is the constant object of the party being sold; while the seller is equally strenuous to gain the highest offer. The one of course recommends—the other depreciates—the former extols the capacity and excellence, the honesty and virtues of the slave he offers, while the latter meets him at every step with the flattest contradictions.

'Here gentlemen' cries the auctioneer, 'here is something you don't often see! Look at this man and woman, and just see these children! They are the finest lot I ever offered for sale! What will you give?'

The last words are not more than out of his mouth, when the men, women and children cry out, simultaneously—

'Aint a fine lot—aint a fine lot!'

'Well, gentlemen,' continues the auctioneer—'come give us a bid! This is a prime fellow!'

'Aint a prime fellow!'

'Why, yes you are a prime fellow Cæsar!'

'No! aint a prime fellow, either.'

'What's the reason you are not a prime fellow! What's the matter?'

'Got a lame leg, and never able to finish my task in time, sir. Massa knows me aint a prime fellow.'

'Oh pshaw! nonsence, Cæsar. You are lazy, thats all the difficulty. What will you give, gentlemen? One hundred dollars—only one hundred dollars—only one hundred dollars for this prime lot of negroes!'

'Aint a prime lot—aint a prime lot!'

'One hundred dollars—one hundred and fifty, fifty, fifty—one hundred and fifty dollars—only one hundred and fifty—why, gentlemen, you dont know what you are losing! Look at that woman isn't she a prime wench? Only one hundred and fifty dollars a piece for this prime lot of negroes!'

'Aint a prime wench—aint a prime wench—aint a prime lot'—comes up in tones so shrill and rapid from the parties to be sold, that the auctioneer is oftentimes forced to cease his recommendations, and to cry only the price that may be offered.

In this contest between the seller and the slave, it often happens that the latter, by insisting upon his defects, gains the advantage and is sold below his real value. Then the congratulation of his fellows upon his success; after he has left the stand, knows no bounds, and the fortunate chattel becomes the hero of the morning.

I remember stepping, last summer, into the 'Vendue Range,' (the chief market for slaves in Charleston) while a sale of plantation hands were going on, to look up a person whom I wanted to see. As I came within the inclosure an old man had just been put upon the stand for sale. My attention was drawn towards him from the extreme disconsolate he manifested, as he stood, withered, bowed down, and almost helpless upon the table of the auctioneer. A shudder seemed to run through the crowd of buyers, in seeing so aged a person exposed for sale, and even the auctioneer himself, little accustomed to manifest any sympathy for his victims, seemed shocked as he reluctantly cried out, 'Well, gentlemen what will you give for this old man?'

A moment's silence followed, when a gentleman, taking compassion upon the fellow, said, 'I'll give ten dollars for him.' 'Knock him off—knock him off,' cried several voices, 'dont keep the old man up there,' and the auctioneer knocked him down at ten dollars. No sooner had the hammer struck the board, and the word 'sold—take him down,' fallen on the old man's ear, than a perfect metamorphosis took place in his whole appearance. Straightening himself up, with a nod of gratitude to the buyer—'Good, good, me have an easy time now'—and with an agility that a moment before would have seemed miraculous, sprang from the stand to the ground and running to a corner of the Range, received the congratulations of his fellows upon his successful *ruse*.

That there are instances of great personal abuse of slaves, of wanton cruelty in their treatment, for reckless violations of domestic ties, and of egregious wrong for base and mercenary purposes, cannot be denied. Unless power is always subject to abuse. But to represent these instances as examples of the whole and draw from them conclusions against the great majority of masters, is manifestly unjust. It is not from the physical condition of the slave that a great argument against the institution is to be drawn. Custom all over the world is infinitely stronger than law, and custom in the slave states prescribes less labor for the servant, and better treatment from the master, than in any free country in the world. Lord Morpeth remarked with his characteristic simplicity and plainess, after he had passed several weeks on the Cooper and Ashley rivers, 'I am an Englishman, and cannot be expected to yield my predelictions for free labor, but yet I frankly confess that I have never seen in Europe a class of peasantry exposed to so few privations, or apparently so happy in their condition as are the slaves of South Carolina.' The testimony of every unprejudiced traveler over the southern states, has ever gone to coroborate the same; he who doubts that as a class, the slaves are contented, cheerful, and happy, should mingle with them in their work hours on the plantation, or listen to their merry laugh, ringing from house to house in the summer, or through the winter evening.

It is not in the physical condition of its subjects that the great argument against the institution of slavery is to be found. It is the moral and intellectual degradation in which the slaves are found—and which is not incidental only, but essential to the existence of the system, which constitutes the true argument against it. Here is its weakness—here lies the whole gist of its wrong. It stupifies the soul, and does it purposely. It blinds the eye of reason, and shuts truth from the heart. It pampers the body, and starves the mind. And the very last trace of God's image in the creature man is defaced and blotted out. For all this the master is not to be blamed, but the system—and thousands of good men at the South mourn over it as an evil which they cannot cure.

The slaves upon the plantation are far more ignorant than those who live in the cities. The latter, from their constant intercourse with the whites, become shrewd, acute, and oftentimes very intelligent. Indeed it is not unfrequent that the favorite house servants are taught to read and write, and even to cipher in the fundamental rules of arithmetic. As a general thing, their intelligence is manifested in conversation only; and the effects made to instruct them in what Mrs. Malaprop calls the 'obnoxious scenses,' are entirely thrown away. Especially in numbers, even in those simplest combinations which we teach our children in their earliest years, are they ignorant beyond belief. My attention was first called to this surprising deficiency in their knowledge, in the first settlement I ever made with my laundress, a very respectable middle aged woman, whose conversation and manners were much above her class. 'Well, Minta,' I asked, 'how much do I owe you now?' She replied by stating that on such a day she had washed a dozen and two pieces, on another a dozen and three, on another a dozen and one, and so on, reckoning by a dozen and a fraction of a dozen, and leaving me to make up the amount. She then enumerated the moneys she had received; as for instance, once a dollar, next a half a dollar, then seven pence, then four pence; specifying *coins* each time, until I had put upon paper the full sum she had received. Casting up and substracting the difference, I said—'You want just one dollar and sixty-nine cents, Minta, do you not?"

She looked at me with a half amazed stare, and replied: 'Me don't know what you mean Massa!'

'Why, I mean that I owe you one dollar and sixty-nine cents"

Supposing she had made some mistake in her own reckoning of the bill I enumerated the articles and stated the result, but with no better fortune than before. Minta still replied, 'Me don't understand you Massa!'

'Well Minta,' said I at last, as the only hope of an amicable settlement, 'tell me what you think I owe you and I'll pay it.

She reckoned a moment upon her fingers and said: "You owe me Massa, one dollar, half a dollar, seven pence and four pence.'

'Well done Minta!' said I, 'that is just what I told you myself!'

'No, Massa!' was the reply; 'you no tell me. You say *sixty-nine cents, I say half a dollar seven pence and four pence!*' And yet Minta was a house servant, more than usually bright and intelligent and had always lived in Charleston.

Among the market men and women, however, and in the mechanic trades, there is generally great quickness in reckoning and change and rarely an error in the result. Some few, indeed extend their knowledge even beyond what the necessities of their business require and became distinguished in their taste as literary *savans*. I once saw a communication which had been sent for insertion to the editor of a southern literary magazine, and which, maugre the orthography, contained all the elements of a well told tale, and had been composed and written by a slave. Above all others, however, in the literary line, stands Billy the Jew; the blaskest, raggedest richest and honestest, slave in the whole state of South Carolina. Billy is not only a Jew by name but by descent, and claiming through the African Israelites the paternity of Abraham, he is admitted to all the rights and enjoys all privileges of the wealthy synagogue. In Hebrew and Arabic, Billy is an accomplished scholar; and there are few who excel him in critical knowledge of the Old Testiment Scriptures. With the true instinct of his race, he has hoarded up from his earnings no small amount of money; but with a penuriousness that one can hardly understand, he utterly refuses to purchase his freedom and daily performs his allotted task. To the curious in such matters, Billy has secrets in regard to the African Jews that would while away many a long summer's day, and when a golden key would not fail to unlock for the benefit of his generation. But these instances of intelligence are found only in the city. Over the whole territory of the south the slave is elevated in intelligence and intellect little above the brutes that perish. Every avenue to knowledge is shut out from him. His place of residence, his origin, his age, his rights, he knows nothing of. Alas! he knowest not even his destiny! There is his task, and he performs it; there is his humble cabin and he lies down to sleep.—But the spirit within him, the home prepared for it by a Savior's love, the God who bends the blue sky above him he knows not of. For the wealth of worlds I would not be the owner of such a slave. Not that I *blame* the master, for with the kindest feelings I *pity* him.

And if the petition of an erring soul can reach the sanctuary of the Great Spirit above, in the utter inability of human reason to devise a remedy for this great evil, mine could only be, 'God look in mercy alike upon the master and the slave!'

An "Estampede."

'What, talking still!' exclaimed the doctor, yawning: he had just awoke. 'What the devil can you have babbled about during the whole blessed night? Why, 'tis morn.'

Saying this, he took up his watch, looked at it, applied it to his ear, to see if it had not stopped, and exclaimed:

'By jingo, but I am only half past one.' The parson drew out his also, and repeated the same, 'half past one.'

At that moment the breeze freshened, and I heard the distant and muffled noise which in the west announces either an earthquake or an 'estampede,' of herds of wild cattle and other animals. Our horses, too, were aware of some danger, for now they were positively mad, struggling to break the lassoes and escape.

'Up,' I cried, 'up Gabriel, Roche, up—up, strangers! quick! saddle your beasts! run for your lives; the prairie is on fire and the buffaloes are upon us.'

They all started upon their feet, but not a word was exchanged; each felt the danger of his position; speed was our only resource, if it was not only too late. In a minute our horses were saddled, in another we were madly galloping across the prairie, the bridles upon the necks of their steeds, allowing them to follow their instinct. Such had been our hurry, that all our blankets had been left behind, except that of Gabriel; the lawyers had never thought of their saddle bags, and the parson had forgotten his holsters and his rifle.

For an hour we dashed on with undiminished speed, when we felt the earth trembling behind us, and soon afterward the distant bellowing, mixed up with the roaring and sharper cries of other animals, was borne down unto our ears. The atmosphere grew oppressive and heavy, while the flames, swifter than the wind, appeared raging upon the horizon. The fleeter game of all kinds now shot past us like arrows; deer were bounding over the ground, in company with wolves and panthers; droves of elks and antelopes passed swifter than a dream; then a solitary horse or a huge buffalo bull. From our intense anxiety, although our horses strained every nerve, we almost appeared to stand still.

The atmosphere rapidly became more dense, the heat more oppressive; the roars sounded louder and louder in our ears; now and then they were mingled with terrific howls and shrill sounds, so unearthly that even our horses would stop their mad career and tremble, as if they considered them supernatural; but it was only for a second, and they dashed on.

A noble stag passed close to us, his strength was exhausted; three minutes afterward we passed him—dead. But soon, with the rushing noise of a whirlwind, the mass of beaver and less speedy animals were close upon us; buffaloes and wild horses, all mixed together, an immense dark body, miles in front, miles in depth; on they came, trampling and dashing through every obstacle. This phalanx was but two miles from us. Our horses were nearly exhausted; we gave ourselves up for lost, a few minutes more and we should be crushed to atoms.

At that moment the sonorious voice of Grbriel was heard, firm and imperative. He had long been accustomed to danger, and now he faced it with his indomitable energy, as if such scenes were his proper element:—'Down from your horses,' cried he; 'let two of you keep them steady. Strip of your shirts, linen, anything that will catch fire; quick, not a moment is to be lost.' Saying this, he ignited some tinder with the pan of his pistol, and was soon busy in making a fire with all the clothes we now threw him. Then we tore up withered grass and buffalo dung, and dashed them on the heap.

Before three minutes had passed, our fire burned fiercely. On came the terrified mass of animals, and perceiving the flame of our fire before them, they roared with rage and terror, yet they turned not, as we had hoped. On they came, and already we could distinguish their horns, their feet, and the white foam; our fuel was burnt out, the flames were lowering; the parson gave a scream, and fainted. On came the maddened myriads, nearer and nearer; I could see their wild eyes glaring; they wheeled not, opened not a passage, but came on like messengers of death—nearer—nearer—nearer still. My brain reeled, my eyes grew dim, it was horrible! I dashed down, with my face covered, to meet my fate.

At that moment I heard an explosion, then a roar, as if proceding from ten millions of buffalo bulls—so stunning, so stupifying was the mass of animals, not twenty yards from us. Each moment I expected the hoofs which were to trample us to atoms; and yet, death came not. I only heard the rushing as of a mighty wind and the trembling of the earth. I raised my head and looked.

Gabriel at the critical moment had poured some whiskey upon the flames, the leathern bottle had exploded, with a blaze like lightning, and, at the expense of thousands crushed to death, the animals had swerved from contact with the fierce, blue column of fire which had been created. Before and behind, all around us, we could see nothing but the shaggy wool of the huge monsters; not a crevice was to be seen in the flying masses, but the narrow line which had been opened to avoid our fire.

In this dangerous position we remained for one hour, our lives depending upon the animals not closing the line; but providence watched over us, and after what appeared an eternity of intense suspense, the columns became thinner and thinner, till we found ourselves only encircled with the weaker and more exhausted animals which brought up the rear. Our first danger was over, but we had still to escape from one as imminent—the pursuing flame, now so much closer to us. The whole prairie behind us was on fire, and the roaring element was gaining on us with a frightful speed. Once more we sprang upon our saddles, and the horses, with recovered wind and with strength tenfold increased by their fear, soon brought us to the rear of the buffaloes.

It was an awful sight! a sea of fire roaring in its fury, with its heaving waves and unearthly hisses, approaching nearer and nearer, rushing on swifter than the sharp morning breeze. Had we not just escaped so unexpectedly a danger almost as terrible, we should have dispaired and left off an apparently useless struggle for our lives.

Away we dashed, over hills and down declivities; for now the ground had become broken. The fire was gaining fast upon us, when we perceived that, a mile ahead, the immence herds before us had entered a deep, broad chasm, into which they dashed, thousands upon thousands, tumbling hedlong into the abyss. But now, the fire rushing quicker, blazing fiercer than before, as if determined not to lose its pray, curled its waves above our heads, smothering us with its heat and lurid smoke.

A few seconds more we spurred in agony; speed was life; the chasm was to be our preservation or our tomb. Down we darted, actually born upon the back of the descending mass, and landed, without sense or motion, more than a hundred feet below. As soon as we recovered from the shock, we found that we had been most mercifully preserved; strange to say, neither horse nor rider had received any serious injury. We heard, above our heads, the hissing and cracking of the fire; we contemplated with awe the flames, which were roaring along the edge of the precipice—now rising, now lowering, just as if they would leap over the space and annihilate all life in these western solitudes.

We were preserved; our fall had been broken by the animals that had taken the leap a second before us, and by the thousands of bodies which were heaped up as a hecacomb, and received us as a cushing below. With difficulty we extricated ourselves and horses, and descended the mass of carcasses, we at last succeeded in reaching a few acres of clear ground. It was elevated a few feet above the water of the torrent, which ran through the ravine, and offered to our broken down horses a magnificent pasture of sweet blue grass. But the poor things were too terrified and exhausted, and they streached themselves down upon the ground, a painful spectacle of utter helplessness.

We perceived that the croud of flying animals had succeeded in finding, some way further down, an ascent to the opposite prairie, and as the earth and rocks still trembled, we knew that the 'estampede' had not ceased, and that the millions of fugitives had resumed their mad career. Indeed there was still danger, for the wind was high, and carryed before it large sheets of flames to the opposite side, where the dried grass and bushes soon became ignited, and the destructive element thus passed the chasm and continued its pursuit.

We congratulated ourselves on thus having found security, and returned thanks to heven for our wonderful escape; and as we were now safe from immediate danger, we lighted a fire and feasted upon a young buffalo calf, every bone of which we found had been broken into splinters.—*Travels and Adventures of M. Violet in California, Sanora, and Western Texas.*

The Ruling Passion.

Bonaparte died in his military garb, his Field Marshal's uniform and boots, which he had ordered to be put on a short time previous to his dissolution. Augustus Cæsar chose to die in a standing position, and was careful in arranging his person and dress for the occasion. Julius Cæsar, when slain by the conspirators in the capitol, consealed his face beneath the folds of his toga, so that his enemies might not see the death-pang upon his countenance. Siward, Earl of Northumberland, when at the point of death, quitted his bed and put on his armor, saying "that it became not a man to die like a beast." A more remarkable instance is that of Maria Louisa, of Austria, who a short time before she breathed her last, having fallen into a slight slumber, one of the ladies in attendence remarked that her Majesty seemed to be asleep. "No," said she, "I could sleep if I could indulge repose; but I am sensable of the near approach of death, and I would not allow myself to be surprised by him in my sleep; I wish to meet my dissolution awake."

Such are the effects of poor, expiring mortality—still clinging to earth—still laboring for the breath of posterity, and exerting itself in efforts to fall with "gracefulness to the last."

One of the most characteristic illustrations, however, of the "ruling passion," has just occurred in South Carolina. A well known betting man—the brother of a prominent turfman of the Old Dominion—was laying so dangerously ill that his friends expected his dissolution momentarily. The physician, bending over his dying patient, apprised him that he could not live but a few hours, whereupon the latter faintly asked him the amount of his bill? The astonished doctor replied, "Fifty dollars."—"Then," replied the dying man, "I'll bet you double or quits that I live till morning." He lived just long enough to win the doctor's bill, and then died.—*Raleigh (N. C.) Register.*

Western Trade and Travel.—It appears that the competition for the enjoyment of the trade and travel passing between the Atlantic waters and the Ohio river is to be urged next year in a new form and with renewed energy by our Pennsylvania neighbors. The Hollidaysburg Standard says—'A company of enterprising citizens of this state intend placing a line of Steam Canal Packet Boats on the Pennsylvania Canal, for the transportation of passengers; also a sufficient supply of new and improved Passenger Cars on the Columbia and Portage Rail Roads. With a line of Steam Packet Boats, passengers will leave Philadelphia at 6 A. M. and arrive at Pittsburg at 10 A. M. of the third day, making the entire trip in two days and four hours. This means of conveyance will be much less expensive than the old mode of towing by horses. We are informed that it is intended to use boats with paddle wheels at the bow of the boat, which, it is said, have been tried and found to answer every purpose.'—*Balt. Amer.*